HOW THE NEXT GENERATION SPEAKS IN THE WORKPLACE: MILLENNIAL COMMUNICATION STYLES

Dr. Edward De La Torre
July 6, 2017

DR. EDWARD DE LA TORRE: BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

- B.A. Business & Psychology and M.B.A. – Cal State Fullerton
- Ed.D in Organizational Leadership – Brandman University
- Administrator - Fifteen Years in Higher Education
  - Advancement, Academic Affairs, Student Services, Finance & Administration
- Educator - Eleven Years in Higher Education
  - Adjunct Lecturer for Operations & Principles of Management, Business Statistics, Organizational Behavior & Development, Leadership Theory, Organizational Research
- Hobbies/Interests: Fitness, Movies, Art & Culture, Cooking, Disney
QUESTIONS FOR YOU!!

- Do you believe in Astrology or signs of the Zodiac...? Do you believe in the personality properties of Air (mind), Fire (spirit), Water (emotion), and Earth (heart)?
- Are you familiar with the Four Houses of the Harry Potter series... Ravenclaw (logic), Gryffindor (courage), Slyterhin (power), and Hufflepuff (loyalty)?
- Do you believe in current personality tests such as the Meyers-Briggs personality test? Extroverts/Introverts, Sensing/Intuition, Feeling/Thinking, Judging/Perceiving?

If you are familiar or believe in any of these, then you are actually familiar with differences in Communication Styles!
Generations – Characteristics & Conflict

- Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) – pursue stability & consistency, cherish hard effort and sacrifice, value loyalty and teamwork
  - Communication should be formal and concise, but meaningful

- Generation X (born 1965-1982) – pursue resilience & independence, cynical toward authority, self-motivated, value work flexibility & work-life balance
  - Communication should be informal and detailed, but clear and purposeful

  - Communication...

Intergenerational (Values) & Interpersonal (Personality & Communication) Conflict

Communication Styles

- Communication Styles: Classic Paradigm – Four Styles
  - Ancient Greeks – Fire (passion), Air (rational), Water (emotional), Earth (heartfelt)
  - Medieval Styles – excess body fluids dictated styles – Choleric (assertive), Phlegmatic (cool & steadfast), Sanguine (spirited), Melancholic (soft-hearted)
  - Carl Jung – Controllers, Analyzers, Socializers, Collaborators

- Mok’s Communication Styles Survey
  - Task-Oriented: Driver (fast-paced), Analytical (slow-paced)
  - Relationship-Oriented: Expressive (fast-paced), Amiable (slow-paced)

Some evidence points to generational conflict in the workplace stemming from communication differences. Are styles of communication one of these factors?
Reflection Session...

- Based on the previous information presented to you on Communication Styles, what are some details of your own communication style?

- What is your generation? Are there some communication styles or people that you get along with more than others? What are those styles or people like?

- Write down your thoughts, but do not share your answers with anyone. We are going to share these thoughts a bit later.

Millennial Communication Styles: Conducting the Study
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY & INSTRUMENTATION

Three ideas were investigated:
1) **The communication styles of Millennial employees** working in professional service organizations
2) The correlation between the communication styles and Millennials’ **communication satisfaction with their supervisors**
3) The correlation between the communication styles and Millennials’ perceived **competence of their supervisors**

To achieve this, three instruments combined into one online survey:
- Mok’s Communication Styles Survey (MCSS)
- Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory (ICSI)
- Communicator Competence Questionnaire (CCQ)

POPULATION & SAMPLE

- The **target population** of this study was employed Millennials of the Southern California region who were **born between 1983 thru 1997** (those of **legal working age** without the need of a special legal permit).

- For a population of 1.0 million+ people, to achieve a good confidence level in the results, the sample size was over **271 participants**.
Millennial Communication Styles: Results

What are the Communication Styles of Millennial Employees?

- Nearly 75% of Millennial Communication Styles can be described as either Driver (fast-paced, task-based), or Amiable (slow-paced, relationship-based). Opposite sides of the spectrum!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Style</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amiable</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 254
Let’s test out these findings…!

● Select a partner to engage in conversation. Ask them these five questions below and take note of how they respond. You’ll have a few minutes to ask each other the questions. After that, I would like a few people to volunteer their guesses as to what their partner’s styles might be.

● Questions:
  ● “How are you doing today?”
  ● “What has been the best part of Immersion thus far for you?”
  ● “Did you do anything fun this Summer?”
  ● “At work, what is the most pending problem that you have right now?”
  ● “What are you looking forward to most by the end of the year?”

Are Millennial Employees Satisfied with Their Supervisors’ Communication?

● Millennials reported that they were satisfied with their supervisor’s communication abilities.
  ● Millennials felt they could present themselves as they desired to their supervisors, they could laugh together at work, and interactions flowed smoothly.

● Also, Millennials reported that their supervisors were competent communicators.
  ● Supervisors have a good command of language, they listen intently, and they understand their employee’s points-of-view.
Are there any interactions between a millennial’s communication style and their views towards their supervisors?

- **Drivers** reported being more satisfied with their supervisors than other types.

- **Amiables** viewed supervisors as more competent than other types.

- **Analyticals** reported both views as well.

- So, task-based communicators are more satisfied with their supervisors overall!!

---

**Other Findings – There is a structure to the Communication Styles Paradigm!**

- Drivers & Analyticals are related – task-based communication
- Amiables & Expressives are related – relationship-based talkers
- Analyticals and Expressives are opposites of one another!
ANOTHER COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY!

- Let’s have members of each of the Communication Styles go to a different corner of the room.
- After finding your other members, sit down with them and answer these questions for a few minutes. Take down some notes about how everyone communicates. Are there any similarities?
  - “What is your favorite sports, hobbies, interests, or activities?”
  - “In general, do you like to speak or listen? See the big-picture or look for details? Act based on what you think or what you feel? Be organized or be spontaneous?”
  - “If you had $1.0M given to you today with no strings attached, what would you do with it?”
- Now find some people opposite from you across the room and sit down together. Answer the same questions for a few minutes and take down some notes. Are there any differences?

MILLENNIAL COMMUNICATION STYLES: SUMMARY
WHAT DO THE RESULTS MEAN FOR YOU?

1) Millennials are predominantly one of two communication styles: 75% of Millennial population are either Amiable or Driver.
   - Are you a Millennial employee? Do you think this is true? If you manage Millennial employees, keep in mind how they communicate.

2) Millennials are generally satisfied with the communication skills of their supervisors and they view their supervisors as competent communicators.
   - Are you satisfied with your supervisor’s communication? If you are a supervisor, how can you ensure that your employees are satisfied?

3) Communication satisfaction and competence are also significantly related, but are not the same.
   - Although you might be a competent communicator, employees may not be satisfied. Strive for both in communication exchanges!

IDEAS FOR FURTHER ACTION

- How Millennials communicate in comparison to the older generations still needs to be researched.
- Other sources of intergenerational conflict must exist in the workplace and should be explored.
- Task-based communicators within the Millennial generation are generally more satisfied with their supervisors communication skills than their relationship-based counterparts. Why is this??
- Use of the MCSS as a tool for measuring communication styles is valid, as well as the use of the ICSI and the CCQ in measuring communication characteristics. Use these tools for other purposes and future studies!
QUESTION??

THE END
THANK YOU!!

Dr. Edward De La Torre, delatorr@brandman.edu
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/edward-de-la-torre-ed-d-96a36014